

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE

# Library Assistants' Association.

Edited by

### H. TAPLEY SOPER.

Public Library, Stoke Newington, N.

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No. 56.

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# Che Library Assistant:

The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.

No. 56.

AUGUST, 1902.

Published Monthly

### THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895. SEVENTH SESSION. YEAR 1901-1902.

Members are requested to read carefully the announcements appearing on this and the following pages, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements may be expected.

### AUGUST EXCURSION TO EPPING FOREST.

It has been arranged that the next excursion of the L.A.A. will take place on Wednesday, August 13th, to Epping Forest. It is hoped that this outing will prove a success. There is every prospect of a pleasant holiday if only sufficient members will attend. Ladies are especially invited. The proposed programme will be:—A general assembly at Liverpool Street Station (Smith's bookstall) at 2.15 p.m., train to Chingford, and from there, a pleasant ramble to High Beech through the glades of the Forest. A visit to Queen Elizabeth's Lodge will form an item of the ramble. By this time it is hoped that all will have cultivated a suitable appetite for tea at The King's Oak Hotel.

After exploring the beauties of the neighbourhood, and visiting the ancient earthworks of the Loughton Camp, a return

ramble will be made to Loughton Station.

Endeavours have been made to suit this excursion to the pockets of Junior Assistants, so Juniors please notice, and come in your numbers. You will be heartily welcomed. Will those wishing to join kindly send a post card to Mr. William J. Harris, Branch Library, Stroud Green, N. Train leaves Liverpool Street for Chingford at 2.32. Return fare to Chingford, to return via Loughton, 1s. Tea, 1s.

## NORTH-WESTERN BRÅNCH.

SEPTEMBER MEETING.

The next meeting will be held by the kind invitation of Ben H. Mullen, Esq., M.A., at the Central Library, Peel Park, Salford, on Wednesday, September 10th, 1902, when it is expected Mr. Mullen will address the meeting.

For further particulars see September Journal.

### "L.A.A." JUNIOR (1902) PRIZE.

The delay in the announcement of the result of the above competition has been due to the difficulty felt by the adjudicators in arriving at a decision, in consequence of the very equal merit of many of the essays sent in. It was finally decided to award the

FIRST PRIZE to Mr. F. Dallimore, Wigan. Second Prize to Mr. F. Pocock, Holborn.

The following are commended:—"Marmion," "Ulysses," "Tertius," and "Book-Lover."

### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Change of Editor.—The Editor has to announce that, owing to what has been termed his "elevation to the Upper House," it becomes necessary for him to relinquish his office. It is with feelings of considerable regret that he takes this unavoidable step, for during his tenure of office he has made many friends, to all of whom he tenders his best thanks for the assistance they have rendered from month to month in the production of this Journal. Mr. W. B. Thorne, of the St. Bride Institute Library, has been unanimously elected to succeed him in the editorial chair, and it is hoped that he will be able to count on the same generous assistance which has enabled the retiring Editor to bring the Journal to its present popular, and it is hoped efficient, standard.

Birkdale.—Mr. C. J. Weld Blundell, Chairman of the District Council, has offered, as a Coronation gift to the town, a site for a public library and reading-room and £1,000 towards

the erection of the building.

The Brighton Excursion.—On July 9th a number of members and their friends joined in an excursion to Brighton. The attendance was below the average, doubtless because the new Library buildings were not in a sufficiently advanced state to repay inspection, but the party quietly enjoyed the refreshing sea breezes and other attractions of London-by-the-Sea, and much appreciated their respite from the torrid Metropolis.

Finsbury.—It has been decided to black out the betting news from the daily papers. The resolution was carried by a

large majority and one of the members remarked that if by their action they minimised the temptation to the youths of the Borough they would be doing good.

Mr. Carnegie's July Benefactions.—July proved another busy month for the self-appointed adjuster of Legislature deficiencies, as the subjoined list of donations will illustrate:—

Eastbourne.	£10,000	Leicester	£12,000
Fenton	£5,000	Londonderry	£8,000
Finsbury .	£13,000	Mansfield	£3,500
Grays (Essex	£3,000	Northampton	£5,500
Hammersmit	£10,000	*Paddington	£15,000
Haworth .	£1,500	Rawtenstall	£6,000
Lambeth .	£12,500	Rushden	£2,000
Larne	£2,500	Stirchley	£3,000
	Woolwich	£14,000	

This offer is made upon condition that the Acts are adopted.

Kimberley.—By the same boat which brought home the gallant K. of K. we received a copy of the Diamond Fields Advertiser, from which we learn that, the Army having completed its Herculean task of pacification, the Library Authority is following close behind with an offer for educational advancement. It is a pity that the Municipal Authority could not see its way to accept the generous offer made by the Library Authority. suggestion was that if the grant was increased the subscription system should be abolished. Had this been accepted the Library would have been put on a firm municipal footing similar to those of the Mother Country. But it was not to be. we hope will prove to be the next best course was resorted to, and the subscription reduced to a figure which will bring the advantages of the Library well within the means of all but the poorest, the hope of course being that with a much larger subscription list the Institution will be worked at a cheaper rate. This is not altogether satisfactory. The Public Library should be established on a firm municipal basis, and be free to all comers in order to accomplish its maximum of good. We hope that our old friend and colleague, Mr. Dyer, will bring his well-known powers of perseverance to bear until he sees the whole of South Africa equipped with a complete system of Library Block Houses established on a principle equal to, if not better than, that in vogue in the United Kingdom.

Wolverhampton Conference.—The Committee regrets to have to announce that owing to the very few guarantees of attendance received, it has been reluctantly compelled to abandon the project.

# SOME SYSTEMS OF CLASSIFICATION. By P. Evans Lewin.

Read at the April Meeting of the Library Assistants' Association.

The classification of books may be briefly summed up as of two kinds-bibliographical and philosophical. It is not necessary here to do more than touch upon the bibliographical side of the question. A bibliographical and material classification must necessarily rank inferior to a scientific and philosophical classification. A child may attempt a classification of his playthings by putting together round objects such as marbles and chestnuts, and square objects such as toy bricks and wooden dominoes; but the help of the scientific man is required in order that the child may learn that the substance of marbles and bricks belongs to the mineral, and that of dominoes and chestnuts to the vegetable kingdom. In the same way books may be classified in a catalogue according to date, language, country, and the presses from which they issued; or on the shelves according to their size, colour, binding, or any other peculiarity which may take the librarian's fancy, and his fancy may sometimes run riot, as was the case with the naturalist who classified the whole order of fishes according to the various peculiarities of one fin.

It will be seen that the classification of books may have a dual nature: they may be classified on the shelves or in the catalogue, the two not necessarily going together. To this day some librarians adopt a mere material shelf classification for their books, without having a classified catalogue; generally, of course, dividing the books into main classes according to their contents; beginning with the smallest book at the top of the case and continuing down to the largest by minute gradations. As a mere matter of convenience in the shelving arrangements or pleasingness to the eye, this scheme of arrangement is very well—

"The rows of books in silence stand,

And catch the passer's eye," yet this studied order of size is *not* classification.

Other librarians attempt to make their shelf classification coincide with their catalogue classification, and to me this system seems the most commendable. It is generally worked with a modified form of size classification, the folios, quartos, octavos, and sometimes the smaller books, being placed on different shelves for convenience.

But for the purpose of this paper I shall endeavour to give a statement of the different systems of philosophical classification which have been, or are now, in use, It seems that like many other things connected with books, the earliest scheme of classification originated with the Chinese. Long before the invention of printing in Europe they had divided the field of knowledge into about twenty main classes with their sub-divisions. It scarcely seems credible, however, that the books of the Alexandrian libraries were not classified and apportioned to the different schools of thought which collected in that metropolis. The enlightened Ptolemies could hardly have allowed a hap-hazard arrangement at the institutions they founded and supported, nor could the philosophers, from Ptolemy Philadelphus to the illfated Hypatia, in whose days the books received their crowning desecration at the hands of Cyril's most Christian monks, have tolerated confusion in the libraries they loved so well.

It is, however, to Conrad Gesner - a name that should always be honoured among librarians-that Europeans are indebted for the first practical system of classification. Gesner, who was born at Zurich in 1516, and became a professor in its University, has been called the Pliny of Germany. Undoubtedly the position he occupies in the literature of his age is a very high one, for there are no less than 171 entries in the British Museum Catalogue relating to this one man, and he wrote on all kinds of subjects including botany, pharmacy, medicine, natural philosophy, grammar, and history. It is in the Supplement to his Bibliotheca Universalis, which, being a list of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin books with short criticisms and remarks, may perhaps be looked upon as a forerunner of the annotated catalogues of our own day, that we find his system of classification. It is divided into six main groups, of which Sermonales embraced (with others) Philology and Poetry; and Mathematicæ included Arithmetic, Music, Astronomy, and the allied scientific and Most of these groups are largely extendedthus, the first one, "De Grammatica," has 21 sub-divisions, some of which are again divided. Gesner died in 1565 of the plague, and when he found his end approaching desired that he

<sup>\*\*</sup> Gesner was preceded by at least one other classifier, Alexo Vanegas de Busto, of Toledo, 1540, and was closely followed by Florian Trefler, a Bavarian monk, 1560; John Rhodius, of Padua, 1631; François de Araoz, 1631; and Claudius Clement, of Madrid, 1635. Systems of classification had been in use in monastic libraries from an early date, i.e., at S. Riquier in A.D. 831, and at S. Emmeran zu Regensburg (Ratisbon), 1347. The elder Aldus and Robert Estienne published classified catalogues in 1498 and 1546 respectively, and Andrew Maunsell, of London, published one in 1595, Petzholdt in his Bibliotheca Bibliographica, 1866, gives a list of the systems then known.

<sup>†</sup> Pandectarum sive Partitionum universalium Conradi Gesneri Tigurini, medici et philosophiæ professoris, libri xxi. Tiguri [Zurich], 1548.

might be carried into the Museum with which he had been connected for so long a time, and thus die amidst his pupils and surrounded by the monuments of his labours.

He was followed by a Frenchman, Christopher de Savigny, the forerunner of many other French classifiers who flourished in France in the 17th and early 18th centuries—a period of great activity in that way across the Channel, but an almost barren epoch in England.

Savigny, in a large folio work published in 1587, gives for the edification and profit of the young at table of all the arts divided into 16 main divisions, with many sub-divisions. That he entered on his work in earnest is shown by the fact that grammar alone has 78 divisions and ethics 66; others being in like proportion. He is lauded by the French bibliographers as the forerunner of Bacon, who is accused of having to some extent founded his system on Savigny's.

It is to Bacon, however, that we as Englishmen must look for our first system of classification. In his Advancement of Learning he produces a scheme which, crude and vague as it is, must yet be regarded as the father of English classifications. Human knowledge he divides into three great classes-Memory, Reason, Imagination; and names them History, Philosophy, Poetry. History was divided into two main headings-Natural and Civil: Philosophy into three-God, Nature, Man. restriction of the sense of the word Philosophy has somewhat changed the use of his classification, for we no longer look upon philosophy as inclusive of natural science, but as being the study of that which is non-material, or the working of the mind-a signification which is even now undergoing change as the connection between mind and matter is more and more demon-One cause, therefore, for the modification of all "arbitrary" classifications is the gradual changing of the signification of words. The system of Bacon has been made the groundwork of other schemes by Regnault-Warin, Laire, Peignot, and D'Alembert.

After Bacon comes the system of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, though other attempts were made in England, I believe, before his time. Then Edward Edwards propounded a scheme which had the advantage of being a natural progression of knowledge; thus Theology, Philosophy, History, followed one another.

<sup>\*</sup> Tableau accomplis de tous les arts libéraux, contenant brièvement et clèrement, par singulière méthode de doctrine, une générale et sommaire partition des dicts arts, amassez et reduicts en ordre pour le soulagement et profit de la jeunesse. Paris, 1587.



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Perhaps the best known English system is that in use at the British Museum.\* It has been tried for many years, but is found wanting in this-that it does not go far enough because the immense number of books dealt with requires a more extended classification than is attempted. It is to be understood, however, that the British Museum System is probably only of value to the Museum itself, and is not suitable for an ordinary public library. Though philosophical it is practical. Too many systems seem philosophical without having the latter virtue; that is, the ordinary man is unable to understand them, and they therefore fail because they do not bring the ordinary educated reader in touch with the books classified. It seems to be thought by the general public that the British Museum offers no scheme of classification whatever because they are, at present, only brought into contact with an author catalogue. But this is not There exist all the materials for a classified catalogue in the shelf registers. The books in the Museum are classified on the shelves and in an order which is at least philosophical. They are divided into 10 main classes. First of all comes Theology as the most ancient and the most natural of beginnings. starting with the Bible arranged first under its original languages. and then under Greek and Latin, followed by their derived languages in due pedigree order; then the Slavonic tongues, and finally the Oriental. Theology or Divine Law is most justly followed by Human Law called Jurisprudence, followed by the knowledge of Nature called Natural History and Medicine. Then, though not such an obvious progression, comes Archæology and Arts, followed by Philosophy and Sciences (Bacon's old division, be it observed). Then comes History, collected works first, and the others geographically arranged. Sandwiched in between History and Biography is Geography, an arrangement open to objection. Finally, Belles Lettres (including Encyclopædias and Fiction) and Philology. These ten main divisions are divided into about five hundred sections.

Three other important schemes must be dealt with, two originating in the United States (Cutter's and Dewey's), and one in England (Brown's).

American librarians, and to a large extent English and Continental, seem to have followed the lead of Dewey. Whatever may be said about his system of classification—and it is open to objection in some places—there can be no two opinions about the excellence of his decimal system of notation. First come the ten main classes which are sub-divided to the hundredth

To be found in the Transactions of the Conference of Librarians, 1877.

number, and by means of decimal points may be extended to as many sub-divisions as desired. The main advantage of this is that when a science and a literature on that science spring up they can at once be assigned a position without affecting the rest of the classification. Thus M. Santos Dumont on Balloon Steering need not be left out in the cold. Dewey's is the most minute system of classification yet published (what lurks in the brains of other librarians we know not), and the extensive index is probably the chief cause for its more general use. But like everything of mere human origin it has its faults. Religion is especially weak, giving little provision for Comparative Religion. Literature seems a general dumping ground, for it includes Classics, Letters, Poetry, Fiction, etc., and History, Biography, and Travel are conjoined in one class, but without doubt the necessary limitation of the number of classes to ten accounts for this.

The relative popularity on the Continent of Dewey's and Cutter's systems may be tested by the fact that there are books and pamphlets in the British Museum on Dewey in the following languages-English, French, German, Spanish and Italian, and not one on Cutter.\* Perhaps I should mention the American language too, for a perusal of the introduction to Dewey's Decimal System of Classification will reveal many peculiarities which might have gladdened the heart of the late Sir Isaac Pitman, but which are scarcely pleasing to an English eye. Even the British Museum authorities are constrained to place that expressive little word "sic" after one of the most trying

examples.

The other American system—that of Cutter—is still in process of formation. So far it has been divided into six classifications—and a bit. The first is only suitable for a very small library, and the sixth is supposed to do for a library of a million volumes. Some of the classes of this sixth classification have again been expanded very largely, notably religion, and form the "bit" I have alluded to. There is a small subject index to the sixth classification, and to parts of the now forming seventh classification, but for usefulness it cannot be compared to Dewey's index. Cutter's Expansive Classification is divided into 36 main classes, with room for additional classes by means of other letters or symbols. Each class is known by a letter, and in addition to letters figures are used in some cases. Thus 45 always stands for England, and 60 for Asia, and by expansion

<sup>\*</sup> Cutter's System is in use at the Passmore Edwards Public Library, Borough Road, and an examination of the Supplementary Catalogue will give a very fair idea of its application.

6899 for British Burma, and so on ad infinitum. 39 stands for France, and so 39An3 for Andorra. But let us look at some of Cutter's own descriptions of books, for they are weird in the extreme—and yet so simple that the originator says he has found no difficulty when they are once explained. But oh, the explanation! Here is a book called Hughes' Windsor Forest: G45W72.H8; and here is Martin's Old Chelsea, G45C41.M3., and in some American libraries books are asked for under these symbols. Now for the explanation. G stands for Geography, 45 for England, W for Windsor, 72 is from an alphabetical order-table of Cutter's own invention, and H8 stands for Hughes. Here is another example, a very mild one—YfOl 35ag. This represents Mrs. Oliphant's "Agnes," Yf for fiction, Ol 35 for Oliphant, and ag for Agnes. We seem to be back in the old days of mnemonics when by some long forgotten jargon our fathers learned that William the Conqueror was crowned in 1066 and that Queen Elizabeth died in 1603. The explanation, you see, is perfectly simple, but of all the devices for bewildering the borrower and assistant. I regard this as the most soul-stirring. Cutter's classification I have heard described as more scientific than Dewey's, and it is very highly spoken of by Dr. Richardson in his "Classification." It may be so, I am no judge; yet its dress is most unbecoming, and if there is any practical use, save that each book gets a different symbol, for such a superingenious device as YfOl 35ag I shall be delighted to hear of it.

There is one English system that needs mention, that of J. D. Brown. I do not know this system, except that the classes are designated by letters and the sub-divisions by figures. I have been told that it is concise and practical, but much shorter

than the other systems.

There are other minor systems in use: one at Melbourne, which builds up a classification on the smallest foundation, beginning at sponges, and so on through Biology to other subjects arranged on (to the originator) a strictly philosophical basis; others, which have been published in America, by Fletcher, Harris, Schwartz, and Perkins; several systems originating in Italy; one by Lord Lindsay; and that used by Sonnenschein.

The great drawback to close classification seems to be this: that whereas knowledge can be minutely classified, books cannot. So many main divisions with their chief sub-divisions seem to me all that is necessary for the classification of books on the shelves of a small library. Few books deal with one subject only. A book on the circulation of the blood will probably touch on other allied matters, and therefore cannot fall under one of those minute divisions so dear to the Deweyite. Books on specialized subjects

become rarer as time goes on (though, paradoxical as it may seem, they increase titularly year by year), for all knowledge is so intimately connected and interbound that it is almost impossible nowadays to keep to the defined minutiæ. The difficulty of strictly classifying books of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries is too well known to need enlarging upon. It therefore becomes apparent that books which are too closely classified are, so to say, lost sight of. The specialist has his own libraries, the doctor, the divine, the lawyer, the chemist, the engineer, where the books may be classified and re-classified until they will bear the process no longer; but for the general reading public a few main divisions with their natural sub-divisions suffice.\* Whether it is wise for the librarian to rely too much on someone else's minute classification rather than follow his own well thought-out plan is an open question. For all libraries to be administered on one plan, for all their books to be classified on the ideal system (which will never be invented), as many ideal librarians will be required as there are libraries unless the librarian is to be a mere figure-head and his assistants clockwork mechanisms. Individuality is, to my mind, even though it have its cranks and fads, far better and of a far higher order than any pattern, ruleof-thumb conduct, without personality, without characteristic and without interest. The pattern librarian of the future, about whom we hear so much, who is worked from a central bureau, I hope never to see; for the man who accepts meekly the decision of a central authority as to where he shall place a book, without question and in perfect faith, is a terrible possibility of the "coming" centralisation of libraries, which may or may not take place ad Calendas Grecas.

#### APPOINTMENTS.

CRAIGIE, Mr. James, Librarian, Arbroath Public Library, to be Librarian of the Sandeman Public Library, Perth.

The other selected candidates were Messrs. Ford, Glasgow; \*Law, Battersea; and McDonald, Dumbarton.

HARGRAVES, Mr., Sub-Librarian, Hull Public Library, to be Librarian, Stockport Public Library.

\*HARPER, Mr. B. J., Senior Assistant, Stoke Newington, to be Sub-Librarian.

\*Members of L.A.A.

<sup>\*</sup> I allude to the too minute classification of works of a technical, scientific or philosophical nature, often dealing incidentally with closely allied subjects which the librarian sometimes ignores. It is impossible for a librarian to have a sufficient technical knowledge of the contents of books of such a nature, and thus the classification is too often by title only.

#### OBITUARY.

We regret the event which makes it our duty to record the demise of the well-known writer on the History and Practice of Typography—Mr. John Southward. Born sixty-two years ago in Liverpool, he was apprenticed to his father, a printer in that city, who published a local paper. Here he not only learned the art of the printer, but was also initiated into the mysteries of journalism.

At one time he made a journey through Spain and contributed to the "Printers' Register" a series of articles on the printing offices of that country. For several years he edited the "Printers' Register," which is one of the oldest trade papers now existing. In the early years of the Library Association he read a paper on the necessity for providing our public libraries with a proper proportion of the best technical works, of which in those days they were in many cases sadly deficient. As is well known to members of the L.A.A. he delivered two courses of lectures on the History of Printing in connection with the Library Association Technical Education Classes, and those who were privileged to hear either will remember the interesting manner in which he treated a somewhat dry subject, and the never failing courtesy with which he answered questions or cleared up difficulties.

His contributions to the literature of typography are too numerous to be fully detailed in a short notice of this description, but mention must be made of the most notable. His principal work is undoubtedly Practical Printing, of which the fifth edition has lately been published. Modern Printing, in four volumes, was the last practical work from his pen. The article Typography in the ninth edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica he wrote, as well as works on Artistic Printing, Printing Machinery, and Authorship and Publication. He was also responsible for a large part of Bigmore and Wyman's Bibliography of Printing, and compiled, with the assistance of the Librarian, the annotated catalogues of the typographical collections in the St. Bride Institute. At the time of his demise he was preparing for press a new work on the History of English Printing, which was also to trace the development of the Art in the Colonies. The manuscript is finished, and publication was expected in the autumn season.

Mr. Southward had been ailing for some time, and recently underwent an operation at St. Thomas' Hospital, from the effects of which he gradually sank and expired on July 9th. As Goethe says, Death is a commingling of eternity with time; in the death of a good man eternity is seen looking through time.

### NEW MEMBERS.

Junior.—Messrs, F. Earl and J. M. Wormald, Tate Library, Streatham.

### APPOINTMENTS VACANT.

[Notice to Library Authorities.—We shall be pleased to publish under this heading, free of charge, particulars of vacancies if full details are sent to the Editor on or before the 28th of each month.]

### METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WOOLWICH.

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The Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich require the services of a second Junior Assistant Librarian.

Salary commencing at £70 per annum. Applicants to be between 19 and 26 years of age, and preference will be given to those who have had previous experience in Public Library work.

Applications in candidate's own handwriting, enclosing copies of three recent testimonials, to be endorsed "Junior Assistant Librarian," and to be sent addressed to me at the Town Hall, Woolwich, not later than Thursday, August 28th.

Candidates will be required to devote the whole of their time to the duties of their appointment.

Canvassing the Members of the Council will disqualify.

By Order,

ARTHUR B. BRYCESON, Town Clerk.

TOWN HALL, WOOLWICH, Fuly 26th, 1902.

#### NOTICES.

All matter for the September number should reach the *Hon. Editor*, Mr. W. B. THORNE, St. Bride Institute, Bride Lane, E.C., on or before 20th August.

All other communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. RADCLIFFE, Public Library, East Ham, E.





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